



Town of Berwyn Heights

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MAYOR
Stephen D. Isler

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Jason W. Papanikolas (Mayor Pro Tem)
Amanda M. Dewey
Jeffrey Jay Osmond
Ethan D. Sweep

Worksession Minutes November 18, 2019 | 7:00 pm

Present were Mayor Stephen Isler, Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore (MPT) Jason Papanikolas, Councilmembers (CMs) Amanda Dewey, and Ethan Sweep. CM Jeffrey Jay Osmond had an excused absence. Also present were Town Manager (TM) Maria Broadbent, Chief Kenneth Antolik, Public Works Director Kenneth Hall, Code Compliance Director Hollyce Goodwin, Assistant to the Town Manager (TMA) Yvonne Odoi, Clerk Kerstin Harper, and citizens.

1. Announcements

The PGCMA Legislative Dinner will be held on December 5. County Councilwoman Dannielle Glaros will host a Senior Resource Fair and Lunch on November 26. RSVPs should be made with Wanda Brooks at 301-952-3060. WSSC will hold an informational meeting about the upcoming water main replacement project on Edmonston on November 20, 6 p.m. in the Senior Center. TM Broadbent received a 30-year public service award from the International City Managers' Association (ICMA).

2. Discussion Items

Department projects: TM Broadbent explained that this is the first of future meetings at which department directors will brief the Council on projects they have been assigned to carry out. The projects may have originated in the budget process, been put forth by the Council, been proposed by a committee or task force or assigned by her to realize best management practices. The project updates will be given on a quarterly basis at worksessions, replacing monthly department reports at Town meetings. Each project is broken down into milestones with assigned dates, which Assistant to the Town Manager (TMA) Odoi is charged with tracking.

TMA Odoi introduced the projects assigned to particular staff members.

Public Information Aide (PIA) Tiffany Minor, who was not present, is working on website improvements, a welcome packet, and PSA videos on Town services.

Treasurer Michelle Rodriguez said she is working on implementing an asset management program to track major Town assets, such as vehicles, computers, tools and firearms. She is currently researching prices and functionality of asset management software with plans to acquire the software by January 2020. She is also developing a reconciliation form for bank statements and an accompanying policy to be completed by early December, and a comprehensive inventory of the Town's financial policies to be completed by the end of January. Electronic payment processing has been largely completed, as well as the merger of BHPD and Administration QuickBooks programs.

Code Director Hollyce Goodwin said several Code Department projects have been postponed because Code is still short-staffed. New iPads have been acquired and she is working with a vendor to fix a technical issue with using the Comcate code management software in the field. Starting in January
KHarper

2020, personal property tax collection will be migrated to the Code Department, using Comcate. The department will also review Town ordinances to develop a list of proposed changes for Council, review the Town website for any code information that needs to be corrected, and work with PIA Minor on creating video clips to explain common code processes and problems. In December, she will seek to obtain an update on a study by the City of College Park to perform building permit processing in-house. Berwyn Heights contributed money to the study and expects to learn whether and how this could be done.

Town Clerk Kerstin Harper reported that a project to scan important Town documents is nearly complete. All that remains is a review of the scanned files and return of the documents. Conversion to paperless agenda packets for Council meetings has been completed, with Councilmembers using new iPads to view the documents. The Town's charter and ordinances have been reviewed and outdated sections identified with the help of indices that show amendment dates. This can serve as the first step to formal codification of the charter and ordinances. The creation of a list of all agreements and contracts is in the initial phases of locating the documents and receiving them from other departments. Adding a vote by mail component for Town Council elections has been postponed to the 2022 election after the Council discussed it with the Board of Election Supervisors. Website improvements are currently made piecemeal, but a systematic review and redesign of the website based on user statistics may be desirable. This will likely require a budget appropriation.

Chief of Police Kenneth Antolik reported that Officer Krouse is leading a team to improve communications with Town businesses and is drafting a schedule for regular meetings. The hiring of a new police officer is underway. Detective Unger and TMA Odoi have conducted some preliminary interviews, to be followed by formal interviews in December and a lengthy process of background checks. One of two budgeted hybrid police cars has been purchased but will likely not be received until mid-June 2020 because the model is on backorder nationwide. He and Director Hall are establishing a process for decommissioning old police vehicles, which should be in place by the end of December. A mobile speed monitoring sign was purchased but turned out not to be very mobile. The vendor has agreed to take the sign back and will propose a more suitable model. Additional radar guns have been purchased and are in service.

Chief Antolik continued that he and TM Broadbent are reviewing the police ordinance and police-related charter sections to identify needed updates. Proposed changes will be presented to the Council in January for review and approval. Detective Unger is working with PIA Minor on ideas for producing educational outreach videos (PSA). He and Director Hall have monitored and discussed the traffic situation in the 8900 blocks of 58th and 60th Avenue. They agree that congestion during rush hour currently does not warrant making drastic changes to parking rules. CM Dewey said the Walkable, Bikeable Berwyn Heights Task Force is studying traffic problem areas and will likely have recommendations for the Greenbelt Road intersections.

Chief Antolik said he has compiled a list of MOUs and agreements affecting police operations and provided them to Clerk Harper to add to an inventory of agreements. Formal police station hours have been set and posted. He and Police Clerk Muralles are compiling a list of all police fees and fines and will provide a copy to the Administration Department by December. The website is being reviewed to ensure that all posted police fees and fines are correct.

Mike Attick, 62nd Avenue, commented that rush hour congestion on 60th Avenue at Greenbelt remains a problem, especially when large trucks and buses are coming through. Cars parked in front of two new rental houses are also blocking traffic.

Director of Public Works Kenneth Hall reported that new recycling containers were delivered to all homes in Town and are now in service. Phase I and II of street repairs have been completed. Repairs to the Public Works building's gutters and fascia have been completed. Landscaping improvements and

planting of trees were postponed because of drought conditions. Painting and carpeting of the Town offices are partially done. Rooms have been painted and two proposals from carpet vendors have been received, with one pending. Carpet installation is scheduled for January.

A bond bill request to make improvements to the Town Center is being handled by TM Broadbent and TMA Odoi. State funds are being sought to connect the elevator and HVAC system to the emergency generators, add a bathroom to the G. Love Room, and replace the roof. The bond bill application is due on December 1. Director Hall said the hiring of new full and part-time employees is ongoing. He hired one new crew member but lost another. An old surplus trash truck was sold at auction for \$6,000, which funds will be applied to the purchase of a second hybrid police car. He met with an electrician to discuss the installation of motion detecting lights in the Town Center but needs clarification on the type of lights wanted, as well as available grant funding.

Director Hall said Berwyn Heights is expecting to receive a set of 'Bigbelly' smart refuse containers, which have sensors to indicate when they are full. A grant application to purchase the containers has been submitted by the Four Cities Coalition. Notice of grant awards are due at the end of December. County officials have been in Town to discuss areas afflicted with stormwater runoff and flooding problems. They will report the findings to relevant County departments to come up with solutions and get back to him. CM Dewey asked whether one of two refuse containers installed at Berwyn Road and 58th Avenue can be moved to Berwyn Road and Cunningham Drive. Director Hall will look into it.

Phil Ventura asked why the emergency generators require more work. TM Broadbent said more Town Center functions should be connected to the generator, which requires rewiring the electric panels.

Town Manager Broadbent reported she plans to establish a committee of volunteers or hire a sign vendor to design a welcome sign for Town entrances. She recommended transferring the Berwyn Heights call-a-bus to the City of Greenbelt, which is already using it and paying for the upkeep. The Council agreed to transfer the call-a-bus.

TM Broadbent said she and TMA Odoi will start reviewing the employee handbook in December and propose a list of updates by March 2020. A GFOA budget presentation, planned for January 2020, will be postponed to 2021. An RFP to study of a possible expansion of the Town office building has been drafted, discussed by the Council, and will be put out to bid in December. A contract may be awarded in January.

Homeowners Tax Credit Program. TM Broadbent explained that the Town received 5 applications for the Homeowners Tax Credit Program (HTC) the Council adopted with Ordinance 180 in September. All were received after the advertised November 1 deadline. The Council is requested to decide whether to extend the deadline. CM Dewey said the Council adopted the Homeowners Tax Credit Program with an amended deadline of December 1. The Ordinance need to be checked to see whether dates are correct. The Council agreed to extend the deadline to January 1 because the HTC program was announced late.

2020 Census update: CM Dewey said she will attend a meeting of the Prince George's County Complete Municipal Count Committee next week. The Town's plans for boosting participation in the census remain as agreed upon at the last worksession: The Town will host a Census Day on April 1, for which Police Clerk Muralles offered act as an interpreter. Further, the Town plans to share information and coordinate outreach efforts with local schools. Schools, libraries and other public institutions are already making their own preparations for Census 2020 outreach.

Election judges' appointment: TM Broadbent said, in the process of researching vote by mail process, she reviewed Ordinance 109 – Town Council Election & Selection Processes, and found the Town is

not following all its requirements. In particular, election judges' positions have not been advertised in the Berwyn Heights Bulletin in December and January prior to an election. Election judge terms are limited to two years and should be re-advertised before each election. All candidates should then be approved by the Town Council before being sworn in at the February Town meeting. She has asked Clerk Harper to draft an election judges' application form that includes a statement of interest, and an advertisement for the Bulletin. They are provided in the agenda packet for the Council's review.

TM Broadbent said she also asked Clerk Harper to look into the process for appointing the Town's 3-member Ethics Commission, which reviews the financial disclosures of Council candidates, Councilmembers and senior staff. Ordinance 110 - Ethics does not specify the term length of Ethics Commission members nor a process for appointment. Clerk Harper said she did further research into the circumstances of adopting Ordinance 110. The Council passed a resolution in February 2012 appointing an Ethics Commission for a term of two years that was to expire in December 2014. However, when the time came, no new appointments were made, and the same people have continued to serve.

TM Broadbent said a process for soliciting applications to the Ethics Commission should also be established. In addition, financial disclosures should be filed by all Councilmembers and staff every year. Clerk Harper said this was done with the exception of 2019, which was an oversight. These financial reports are normally due on April 30 and are then reviewed the Ethics Commission. Clerk Harper added since she has started to work for the Town, she has taken steps to implement a more formal election process that conforms with the Town's Charter and ordinances, helping to update Ordinance 109 and creating a manual that documents every aspect of preparing and holding an election. While not perfect, the process is much better than it was.

Phil Ventura asked whether the current election judges will now be dismissed, and new ones hired, He suggested it may be better to wait until after the election to implement the changes. MPT Papanikolas said their term is about to expire, but the current judges are free to reapply. The Council is not making any changes, except to follow the Ordinance.

Holiday decorating contest: Discussed under E-newsletter.

3. E-newsletter

Mayor Isler provided a draft to the Council's e-newsletter for review. This newsletter will feature the Holiday Decorating Contest, in which the Council will award prizes to the best decorated homes and yards. He proposed that residents be allowed to submit nominations until December 18 and help the Council decide. Winners would be announced at the January Town meeting. The Council had no objections. Other items for this issue included a notice on where to recycle Christmas lights, Toys for Tots, outreach to the Latino community, and holiday refuse schedule.

4. Minutes

Adoption of the October 7 and October 21 worksession minutes was postponed for lack of a quorum.

5. Department Reports

Mayor Isler offered safety reminders for the upcoming holidays. If traveling, residents are encouraged to fill out a house check request with BHPD, suspend mail deliveries and keep their lights on. Those who have pets are reminded that holiday meals are not necessarily healthy for pets. If purchasing presents online through Craig's List, Facebook, LetGo, Offerup and other classifieds apps, residents are encouraged to use an internet exchange safe zone in front of the BHPD police station that is under

continuous video surveillance.

MPT Papanikolas noted that the 7-Eleven on Edmonston Road has installed Amazon post office boxes, where people can have their Amazon packages delivered for safe pickup. This prevents having packages stolen that are delivered to the front door.

CM Dewey announced the upcoming Christmas Tree Lighting on December 7, an Education Advisory Committee meeting on November 25 and a Seniors Lunch & Resource Fair hosted by County Councilwoman Glaros on November 26. Monthly Town cleanups will cease over the winter and resume in March, but residents are encouraged to continue to pick up trash on their walks and around their property. Several deadlines to apply for PGPCS specialty programs are coming up and should be published on the website and social media.

TM Broadbent announced that WSSC will hold an information meeting on November 20 about the upcoming watermain replacement project on Edmonston Road. Phil Ventura asked what project WSSC was doing on Pontiac Street recently. MPT Papanikolas said a new water and sewer hookup was installed and the road was not patched well afterwards. TM Broadbent clarified that this is a temporary patch, which will be replaced with a permanent one that reaches from curb to curb once the ground has settled.

6. Town Council Schedule

The Council reviewed the upcoming Town Council schedule. The January 20 worksession was moved to January 27 to accommodate Martin Luther King Jr. Day .

7. Citizens Discussion

Mike Attick, 62nd Avenue, asked how long certain road repairs are covered by the contractor's guarantee. He was informed the guarantee on pavement is for one year. Mr. Attick also commented that new curbing on 62nd Avenue in front of his house was not scheduled for this year and has some problems. Lastly, the Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness (NW/EP) Committee has not received monthly expenditure statements as they used to. He was told to request one in the office when needed. Monthly statements are not produced for NW/EP as a matter of course. CM Dewey offered to help with this.

Phil Ventura asked for clarification about a bond bill application the Town is planning to submit to the state. MPT Papanikolas said it refers to a pot of money state delegates are using to fund projects in their districts. The Town will apply to receive some of this money to pay for improvements to the Town Center. Mr. Ventura also commented on the architectural study to expand the Town office, the limitation on parking spaces due to lot coverage restrictions, and recommended consulting with a resident, who is an elevator expert, about repairing or replacing the Town Center elevator.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk